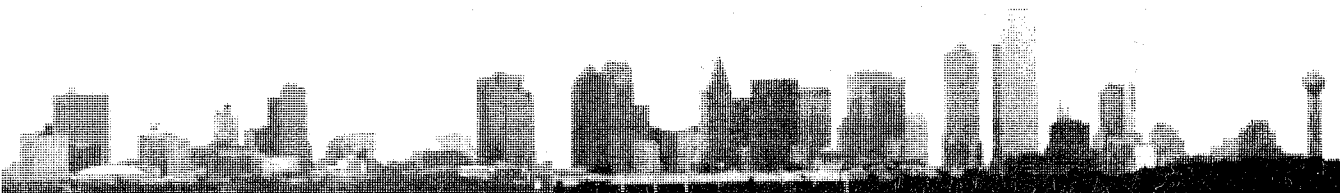


MCCC NEWS

Metroplex Commodore Computer Club



Fort Worth

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Dallas

Rumors?

is this where Commodore is heading?

by Richard Johnson

Here's the latest set of rumors I've come across. Remember, these are just RUMORS, so take them with a grain of salt. (however, personally, I'd say most of these are right on the mark...).

After all the other worthless rumors, many of which are just plain impossible, here are some rumors that are REAL! And things are looking good for Commodore now! We'll save the best for last, so enjoy!

First of all, how is Commodore doing now?

- They are shipping in excess of 20,000 CD32's a week just in Europe/Australia.
- Over 320,000 CD32's have already been sold (And Atari is hoping to sell a mere 50,000 Jaguars this year!).
- There are now far more CD32's than 3DO's (and it's going to stay that way), and will soon (if not already) pass by the Sega CD in numbers.
- They are shipping 40,000 A4000's a month (worldwide).
- Commodore ONLY makes AGA machines: CD32, A1200, A4000, and soon A4000T.
- At the rate Commodore is selling Amiga's, they will ship 2 million this fiscal year! Which is more than they've ever sold in one year, and all AGA machines.
- AGA games are starting to come. Lots of big name developers who dropped the Amiga are now back.

Coming real soon:

- FMV module for the CD32. Supports the Video CD standard and Phillips' proprietary CD-I video CD's! The FMV module is in production now.
- A4000T. Tower case, 5 Zorro III slots, 2 video slots, lots of drive bays, SCSI-II, AmigaOS/Workbench 3.1.
- New A4000. A new, lower price A4000. The 030 version has the CPU on the motherboard. The floppy

drive is now a normal sized unit, so you can fit two of them into the A4000 (it also fits in the A1200...). (These two new machines should be in manufacturing now!)

- CD32 modules for the A1200 and A4000: A1200 version has a SIMM socket, supporting a 1-8 MB SIMM; FPU socket, Akiko chip, and external CD-ROM unit. A4000 version sports the MPEG stuff on a Zorro III card, as well as Akiko and the same external CD-ROM unit. It will also work on the A3000, although some games probably won't work since they require AGA.
- AmigaOS/Workbench 3.1 upgrade for ALL Amiga's. Includes new Datatypes (ANIM, CDXL), new multimedia extensions (realtime.library, tapedeck.gadget), CD-ROM support, tons of bug fixes and optimizations.
- Envoy. Amiga networking system! Yes, contrary to what some individuals have said, Commodore's networking system is here. Useable over the serial ports or any networking card.

Coming in early 1994:

- CD32 will be released in the US in January. Everybody thinks they will screw up again, but I don't. Game magazines are starting to rave about it. We're going to have a ton of games — more than Jaguar or 3DO (or "3-DOH!" as Homer Simpson would say after blowing \$700 on one) or Sega CD. Sega CD games pale in comparison and will lag far behind in every way. 3DO games will be great, though, but will be few and far between. Jaguar games will probably be fast and relatively cool, but will have little graphics or sound because the carts are so small compared to a CD-ROM — and will cost more. CD32 has the largest market, is the easiest to develop for, and offers a good amount of profit per disk (low cost compared to a cartridge, and Commodore's royalty is small and reasonable). The price will rapidly go down to \$300 (it's already around \$370) and a cost reduced model will get that down to \$250 in

1994.

- CEI 4000M. An Amiga/Mac hybrid! It's an A4000 with 10MB of ram, and the EMPLANT card; with 256K Mac ROMs and System 7.1. For a price around \$2500. And of course, for another \$100 you can get the IBM emulation module. It's funny since Apple just released their Mac with IBM compatibility. I bet Apple messes bricks when they see this Amiga that does EVERYTHING! Especially since they plan to advertise in MAC magazines!

- 3DO emulator for the Amiga! This would be a card containing the 3DO's custom chips and should cost around \$300. A Sega emulator is in the works, but I don't know why you'd want one.

- All machines shipped with AmigaOS 3.1.

- Reduced A1200 and A4000 prices. A1200 should get down to \$300, A4000/030 down to \$1200, and A4000/040 to \$1500. AGA actually costs LESS to make than ECS does, which is why the A1200 is so cheap. It would be even cheaper if they could make enough chips!

And coming sometime in mid 94:

- A4000C?: Based on A4000, has only 2 Zorro slots and a small "pizza box" case without the 5.25" drive bay. Uses a 25Mhz EC030 CPU on the motherboard. 2MB chip, 4MB fast, 120MB HD. Cost will be less than the A4000/030 is, around \$1000 street price. Looks a lot like an A1000... Also available with the 040 CPU card.

- A4000-040/40: 40Mhz A4000, 8MB fast, 240MB HD. \$2000.

- A4000T-40: 40Mhz A4000T. The ultimate Toaster workstation.

And finally, in late 1994 (probably to be released at the September WOC) the ones you've all been waiting for: AAA Amigas! (names are tentative)

A1200 and CD^32: Prices down to \$250.

CD^64.

- 4 x speed CD-ROM
- Low end AAA chipset, 2MB DRAM.
- 25Mhz EC030 (twice as fast!)
- 1MB fast ram.

A1400.

- Detached keyboard.
- High speed 1.8MB floppy disk.
- Low profile "pizza box" case. 3.5" floppy and HD bays.
- 25Mhz 030, '882 socket.
- Low end AAA chipset. 1MB chip ram (exp to 16MB), 2MB fast ram (up to 16MB).
- CPU slot.

A4500.

- Detached keyboard
- High speed 1.8MB floppy disk.
- Low profile case, two 3.5" floppy bays and HD

bays.

- 25Mhz LC040.
- Mid-range AAA chipset. 2MB 64 bit chip ram (exp to 16MB), 4MB fast ram (up to 32MB).
- SCSI-II
- 3 Zorro III slots.

A5000.

- Completely new architecture.
- 040, 060 versions (simply change CPU modules).
- RISC model in early 1995. Will use HP's PA-RISC chip.
- AAA chipset (of course).
- DSP on the motherboard.
- up to 16MB chip ram, up to 128MB fast ram (probably 2/8 standard).
- ALL memory is 64 bits wide. Fast ram may even be 128 bits wide, if it improves performance significantly.
- 64 bit PCI slots (confirmed!)
- Four Zorro III slots, five in the A5000T.
- 3.6MB floppy drive.
- High speed SCSI-II interface.
- AmigaOS 4.0 with RTG, networking standard.
- Price well under \$4000 (goal is \$1500-\$2000). Different models with various configurations of chip ram, ram and HD.

There will be nothing out there like this machine.

AAA chipset specs:

- Many different types of arrangements are possible, from low end to high end.
- Low end: uses 32 bit DRAM memory, lacks Linda chip. >57MB/sec bandwidth shared between video and processors (IE, it slows down in hires/hicolour modes). Can be expanded to 64 bit ram (mid range).

Resolutions: 640 x 480 x 16 bit (72Hz non-interlaced)
640 x 400 x 24 bit (60Hz non-interlaced)
1280 x 400 x 24 bit (60Hz interlaced)
800 x 600 x 8 bit (72Hz non-interlaced)
1024 x 768 x 8 bit (60Hz non-interlaced)
1280 x 800 x 6 bit (60Hz non-interlaced)

- Mid range: uses 64 bit DRAM memory, lacks Linda chip. >114MB/sec bandwidth shared.

Resolutions: 640 x 480 x 24 bit (72Hz non-interlaced)
800 x 600 x 16 bit (72Hz non-interlaced)
1024 x 768 x 16 bit (60Hz non-interlaced)
1280 x 1024 x 8 bit (72Hz non-interlaced)

- High end: uses 64 bit VRAM memory and Linda chip. >114MB/sec bandwidth for blitter, CPU, copper, and other DMA; >228MB/sec bandwidth for video. Does not slow down at all in hires/hicolour modes.

Resolutions: 1280 x 800 x 24 bit (65Hz non-interlaced)
1280 x 1024 16 bit (72Hz non-interlaced)

- 8 to 16MB of chip RAM! Can be added in 1 or 2MB increments (for 8 or 16MB).
- Chip RAM can be a mix of DRAM and VRAM. With VRAM, there is **NO CONTENTION** (remember how hires gets REAL slow in 16 colours [ECS] or 256 colours [AGA]? Well no more!). The blitter will be just as fast at 1280 x 1024 as it is at 320 x 200. DRAM of course is cheaper. But you could have, say, 4MB of VRAM and 4MB of DRAM and use the VRAM for the screen and DRAM for images for optimum cost/performance.
- Much faster, 32 bit blitter. Can blit 24 bit images **FASTER** than AGA can blit 8 bit images!! And thus certainly faster than any Mac or IBM..
- Support for Quad-density floppy drives (3.6MB formatted with FFS).
- Support for CD-ROM.
- Two 32 bit chips: Andrea (AKA Agnus/Alice) and Mary (AKA Paula). Andrea: 32 bit blitter and copper, burst mode memory access, 110Mhz display rate (4 x AGA). Mary: 8 channels of 16 bit CD quality audio, floppy and CD-ROM support.
- Two 64 bit chips: Linda and Monica (AKA Denise/Lisa). Linda: video line buffer, controlled by Andrea. Monica: Chunky and planar video modes, HAM/HAM8, true colour, and a new compressed video mode. Any display mode can be programmed.
- Two high speed buffered serial ports.

A prototype AAA based Amiga is up and running NOW.

BEYOND AAA chips(!):

- Real time 3D rendering.
- Gfx pipeline.
- Scaling, rotation, texture mapping.

Reprinted from Amiga Report, Issue 2.01, January 7, 1994. ✓

Question For The Month

*What do you call
parachuting lawyers?
Skeet.*

MegaBall

a great game for all Amigas

If you like the game Arkanoid—a variant of "Breakout" you will really like MegaballAGA. Essentially, you have a paddle and a ball that hits and destroys a number of tiles. It's basically a game of coordination—essentially mindless yet highly addictive. It works on non-AGA Amigas but requires Workbench 2.04 or above. MegaBallAGA even has some features that I have yet to see implemented on commercial AGA games like Zool AGA and Trolls AGA. MegaBallAGA is a superb "breakout" type game. The graphics and simultaneous music and sound effects are state of the art and top notch. I believe MegaBallAGA comes with a total of 25 boards. There are various kinds of tiles on the boards of this Arkanoid clone. Some explode taking other tiles with them, for example. As you wipe out tiles, various icons are released floating downward and if intercepted by your paddle, confer various powers on your paddle or affect the motion of the ball. One icon allows you to jump to the next higher board before wiping out all the tiles on the current board. Another icon gives your paddle lasers to help destroy more tiles more quickly. There are too many to list. The AmigaGuide hypertext help file explains all the details, although you can easily play the game without ever reading the help guide.

The AmigaGuide help document is only one of several features that MegaBallAGA has that I haven't seen on some of the latest commercial AGA games. Of course, you can install MegaBallAGA on your hard drive. More commercial games are including AGA graphics. MegaBallAGA has far surpassed any commercial AGA game. It does this by opening on the Workbench screen or any other public screen. This means that you can get beautiful non-interlaced screens in 256 colors without visible scanlines, among other things. I will never understand why commercial games do not do this. In addition, MegaBallAGA does not take over the computer—you can play MegaBall and simultaneously run all your other software.

MegaBallAGA is free! Of course, there has to be a catch. You can play this game forever and never pay a cent to Ed Mackey, the guy who wrote the code. But, if you eventually tire of the 25 boards, you can register your copy of MegaBall for a measly \$15. You get a registered copy of MegaBallAGA that allows you to load new boards and a board editor to make your own boards. You also get hundreds of ready made boards, including 50 very easy boards with lots of exploding bricks and 50 of the nastiest, most difficult boards. (The other boards fall in the middle between these extremes.) For another \$5, you get additional music that can be loaded into MegaBallAGA written by Ed's brother Al. I say "Go for it." You can get the registered copy of MegaBallAGA, extra boards and the extra music from: Ed Mackey, P.O. Box 475, Wayne, Pa 19087. *[reprinted from the Pittsburgh Commodore Group.]*

Amiga Library News

public domain and shareware picks
from Bill Raecke

Pictures

Of course there are pictures. Lots of good ones, too. The best this month are in JPEG format. On MCCC-A_625 is a picture called roses. It's so good it's almost three-dimensional. On MCCC-A_628 is a picture simply called PCDSamp5, (a photo CD sample). It's a picture of a red barn and its reflection in a small pond. Beautiful! Another PCD pic can be found on MCCC-A_629...a picture of some mountains with a rushing mountain stream in the foreground. Again, beautiful! And on that same disk is a digitized pic of a butterfly, so real you can almost touch it. On MCCC-A_630 is a set of ten digitized pics, all of excellent quality. These ten are ALL standouts. A closeup picture of some hot pink azaleas, a still-life of some fruit so real you can almost taste it, a formation of fighter jets, a beautifully rugged shoreline, Stonehenge at sunset, a duck taking flight from a wooded lake... you get the idea. The subjects are varied, but, as I said, they're all standouts.

Not enough? On MCCC-A_631 are another five digitized pics, just as outstanding as the last set. A picture of a skier with his dog at the top of a mountain overlooking the view is simply breathtaking. A snow-capped mountain and its reflection in a still lake is perfection. And a picture of a tiger relaxing among some greenery is so lifelike it looks more like television than a computer image.

Music

And of course there is music as well. On MCCC-A_626 is a piece called *Galaxy 2*, and on MCCC-A_627 you'll find *Out Of Silence*. On MCCC-A_633 are two pieces worth adding to your collection: *Electrik Funk* and *Mobyie*.

FastJPEG by Christoph Feck

FastJPEG is the best JPEG viewer I have seen. It is not only fast, but the quality of the displayed pictures

far exceeds what the competition can achieve — at least on a non-AGA Amiga. On an AGA Amiga, HAM-8 is used for the display and I expect that it's spectacular. Of course, no way to check it out for myself.

WB-Pics

Yep, I've been at it again. This is turning into somewhat of an addiction for me...and I hope someone enjoys the results. The set on MCCC-A_629 contains a bunch of Patrick Nagel reproductions as well as the carnation picture featured in last month's newsletter and a photo of the Sphinx. As always, these are 640 x 400, 16-color pics with palettes adjusted to make good Workbench backdrops.

TypeSmith 2.01 from Soft-Logik

If you are an owner of *TypeSmith 2.0*, you have probably noticed a few problems by now. Well, you can quit complaining. This patch takes *TypeSmith* from version 2.0 to 2.01 — and in the process fixes all the problems I have found so far. As a matter of fact, a couple of new features have been added at the same time. You'll find the upgrade on MCCC-A_633. ✓



The Primera Printer

it really is as good as all that
by Dwin R. Craig

This review reports the first week of work with the Primera Color Printer by Fargo Electronics of somewhere in Minnesota. After reading their ads in AmigaWorld and Amazing/Amiga I bought one on a 30 day money back guarantee. I'm keeping the printer.

FIRST PRINT

Like their AD says, it's "the color printer you've been waiting for since you bought your first Amiga!" I say "a first look at the first print and you could wet your pants, or panties as the case may be!" I chose to print a 256 color picture file of the image included with the Brilliance paint program - the one you've seen in their ads with the Mackaw, Flamingo, Amiga waterfalls, fish, etc. They call it "AmigaLagoon" and it was drawn by the well known Amiga artist Jim Sachs. The file size is 490K — a big one! I could see no difference between the print and the ad, viewed at arm's length. The glossy surface of the print even feels like a magazine. Try that on your color printer. I couldn't even come close with my trusty Canon PJ1080 ink jet Printer. Also, when holding the print next to the monitor in AGA mode, there was no discernible difference. WYSIWYG from monitor to print.

STARTUP

There are 3 things to do :

Load the ribbon

Load the paper

Load the driver software

Pictures in the manual and Icons on the printer help a lot.

Loading a stack of paper (up to 50 sheets) is a cinch — smooth side down. Easier than laying sod-green side up.

Loading the ribbon into a carrier is likewise easy because of pictures in the manual and on the hardware. The carrier drops neatly into place and can be easily removed to swap carriers with different kinds of ribbons.

The printer driver is on a single disk and includes an "Install" program which puts everything where it belongs. The printer driver is named "Primera.KG2" and appears in devs/printers for your selection from Preferences when using the printer. A readme file on the disk tells you how to set up PRefGFX for ribbon type, etc. I saved the Primera driver so that it would always be selected during all of my tests and when showing off the printer to my friends. Don't forget to plug in the power cord which includes a 12-Volt AC transformer in the line, mercifully using only one outlet on my power strip. Almost ready to go.

CONTROLS

The Primera is definitely a graphics printer, judging from the existence of only two buttons on the control panel — POWER and ON LINE. You are not burdened with buttons for linefeed, formfeed, font selection, draft, NLQ and other choices which have nothing to do with printing a picture. The machine is not for clerk-typists doing word processing and/or spreadsheets. The printer comes online automatically when you power-up the Amiga. Its main function is to be pressed when you power up the printer for self test. The "test print" shows all available characters plus bars of color both solid and half-tones. The online light is also used, by flashing, as a trouble signal. It says "Read the Book"...which I did a couple of times during setup.

SUPPLIED STUFF

The Primera package comes with a 3 color ribbon with enough material to make 30 prints and 30 sheets of coated paper. Some transparency material is also included.

THERMAL TRANSFER

Thermal transfer uses heat to transfer wax from the ribbon to the paper. The computer tells the printer where to put it. Here the ribbon is 8 inches wide and contains a sequence of panels containing yellow, magenta and cyan ink. The Y,M,C sequence repeats for the full length of the roll with the beginning of each sequence being somehow identified so that a signal can be sent to the computer, telling it which color component to send to the printer. The computer is actually making color separations and sending them on demand to the printer. This means that the printer must receive all of the information for an 8x10 image before it does anything. This means a waiting period from a few seconds for a lo-res grey image up to a minute for a 24 bit image. The printer then sucks a piece of paper into its slot and prints a yellow image of the entire picture. It then sends the paper part way out of the slot and says "SEE?" without letting go. It sucks the paper back into the slot, prints the magenta on top of the yellow and then sends it partway out again saying "Lookee!" The final suck prints the cyan on top of the other two and the print is ejected all the way. Pants wetting time.

With 4 color ribbon, the sequence on the ribbon is Y, M, C, Black. With "monochrome" the sequence is black, black, black, etc. The number of prints you can make with a ribbon depends on which one you are using-given a fixed length of ribbon.

The number of prints is as follows:

400 Monochrome	\$40/roll = 10cents/print
115 3-color	\$45/roll = 40cents/print

80 4-color \$45/roll = 56cents/print
Prices are suggested retail and if purchased from
Fargo.

Check the math.

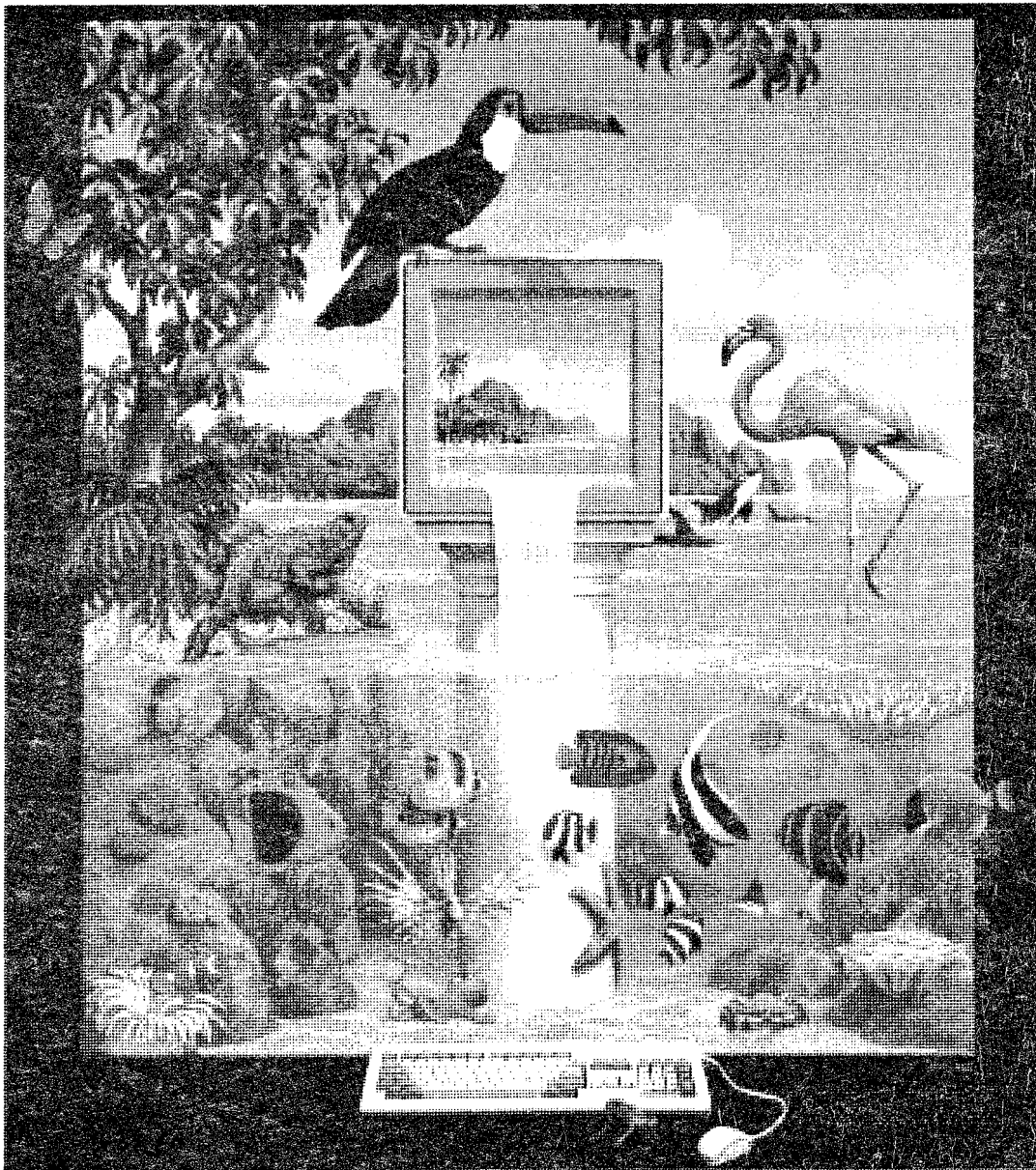
The total sucking and printing time for 3-color was about 2 minutes. You can deduce that it would be 1/3 of that time for monochrome and 30% longer for 4-color.

OPTIONAL SUPPLIES

Other printing materials include two different grades of coted paper, transparency matrial and iron-on material for transfer to T-Shirts,etc. All are described in a nicely printed booklet with prices from Fargo Electronics — maker of the Primera.

THE MANUAL

There are 53 pages, sparsely printed with plenty diagrams. The early pages give the standard FCC warnings in 9 different languages. A great way to learn a foreign language. A Table of Contents and Index use up another 3 pages with specs, and dip switch settings use another 3 pages. 8 pages are devoted to maintenance and trouble shooting. 14 pages tell you how to plug in, load ribbon, paper and software and how to run the self test. The remaining pages tell you how to connect to computer, install the software and how to adjust preferences if you don't like the default. In summary, the manual is clearly written and illustrated to the point where I only needed to reread one trouble shooting page when I loaded the ribbon takeup roller to pull from the bottom instead of the top. I have that same problem with toilet paper.



OPTIONAL KIT

There is an optional kit that uses a different driver and ribbon to produce photo quality prints through a dye sublimation process. My report on that will have to wait 'til another day. Right now, I would call the results equal to magazine quality like the covers of AmigaWorld and Amazing/Amiga.

TESTS

I ran a number of tests using paper stock other than Fargo paper. Tests with different software printing packages revealed more about the software than the printer. In general, coated paper stock is the thing to use. Copy paper was awful with pock marks like a bad disease. Any coated stock that feels smooth to the fingers will do a good job. I have a good supply of such paper that I bought to use in my thermal transfer color copy machine. The big surprise came when I fed a piece of 100wt. Conolith paper into the Primera and it came through without a hitch. 100wt. is 5 times as thick as the 20wt. and is used for high quality magazine covers. Inside pages are usually 20wt. Picture quality was equal, not better with 100wt except there is a lot less showthrough from the backside if printed.

I printed HAM8, 256color, 24bit images from a variety of programs with print capability. Programs like Opalvision and Imagemaster don't have paint functions nor do the animation and morph programs. Lots of prints were made with DPaintAGA, Brilliance and ADPro. Also, oldtimers like Butcher, DigiView and TVtext were put to work. DPaint and Brilliance have no easy way to adjust brightness, contrast, gamma or color balance. With the help of a friend and the manual, I finally found out how to print from ADPro. The word "print" does not show on the ADPro screen, instead you save the image to the printer and are then presented with a screen which lets you position, size and orient the image on the page. More importantly, you get all of those contrast, color balance, gamma, etc. by punching the button labeled "Balancing" and then you tell it to "Execute" so you can see it on the screen. While DPaint and Brilliance produced darker prints than seen on the screen (with no way to adjust) ADPro produced WYSIWYG when the print was held next to the monitor. It's worth the steep learning curve.

RESULTS

I continue to marvel at how great the Primera prints look. With only 3 colors, the solid blacks are solid and black with no streaks, banding or evidence of pixelation. Under a 10 power magnifier, the dots appear to be closer spaced than a good magazine. This is to be expected since good magazines use 133 dots/in while the Primera comes up with 203 dots/in. That is 8 dots/mm and the average human eye 20/20 barely resolves 10 lines/mm. As to solid blacks, 3 color does well enough to suit me. However, the purists may hold the print up to a light and see a slightly greenish cast in the black. If so, he can use the 4 color ribbon and get only 3/4 as many prints per roll of ribbon.

Tests were made from a reference palette familiar to most of us. Close but not identical. ADPro came closer than DPaint. Another thing to marvel at is the excellent color registration as evidenced by fine lines in the self test print. Under 10 power magnification there is no color fringing. The friction drive for running the paper in and out between printing colors is obviously a piece of first class design. In fact the entire printer looks well designed, well made and is very User Friendly.

CLAIMS

The printer equals and/or exceeds all of the claims in their ADs and in their promotion package. Evidently this printer has been around for a while and available for the Mac and PC clones. I guess Fargo never heard of the Amiga or didn't realize that there are a million of them out there salivating for a way to unleash those gorgeous graphics which we see on the monitor.

SPECIFICATIONS

Most of the specs have been discussed above (I hate to make lists) so I will tell you it's smaller than my 24 pin dot matrix and a whole lot quieter. Its automatic sheet feed is almost as easy to operate as a knife and fork. Actually its easier since you only need to use one hand to press the "print" thing in your software.

OBSERVATIONS

Do not be alarmed if nothing seems to be happening after you give the print command. The computer is digesting the info but there is no indication of this by the printer. DPaint show nothing but a PRINTING sign whereas ADPro shows a meter type indicator of % digested...The suspense could last from 10 sec. to 60 sec. depending on the size of the picture file.

SOURCE OF SUPPLIES

The free promotion package from Fargo describes all of the supplies available from them with their prices (suggested retail). Another source of supplies is USA Flex at 1-800-872-3539 and their prices run about 10% less than Fargo.

CONCLUSION

Tests could go on forever because of the infinite number of combinations of Ribbon, paper, software, page formats, test images, etc. The purpose of such tests would be to recommend purchase, or not, of the Primera Color Printer. You don't have to wait forever for my conclusion. I say DO IT!

RECOMMENDATIONS

Call Fargo, toll-free at 1-800-327-4622 in Minnesota for an eye opening package of stuff (sample prints too!) which they will send FREE. I did and was so glad that I bought a printer for their special price of \$599 plus photo kit for \$100. I hope the deal is still on when you read this.



Brilliance

review by Marc Rifkin
downloaded from Portal

Brilliance is a paint and animation program which supports AGA, ANIM-8, and is capable of true 24-bit painting (displayed as HAM).

COMPANY INFORMATION

Name: Digital Creations
Address: PO Box 97
Folsom, CA 95673-0097

LIST PRICE
\$250.00 (US)

HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE REQUIREMENTS

Brilliance works with all Amigas with a minimum 1 megabyte of RAM.

COPY PROTECTION

A hardware device (dongle) must be plugged into the joystick port. Also, the user must enter a serial number the first time Brilliance is installed. The dongle makes this copy protection quite annoying, but Brilliance is still worth it.

MACHINES USED FOR TESTING

Amiga 4000 (040, 10MB RAM)
Amiga 1200 (GVP 40Mhz 030, 10MB RAM)
Amiga 3000 (12 MB RAM)

FEATURES

Brilliance is actually two programs. "Brilliance" is register color only (no HAM) with 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, and Extra Halfbright (EHB); and on AGA 64, 128 and 256 colors. "TrueBrilliance" is true color (15-bit or 24-bit) in memory and uses HAM (or HAM8) for display. A single program would seem to make more sense; but considering how differently they treat some of the functions, one program would be too large.

Many people have Deluxe Paint, and several are using the AGA version. DPaint has become the benchmark to which any other paint/animation program is compared. The biggest difference with Brilliance is speed; the magnify mode comes up instantly, the menus can be toggled off and on easily, and the drawing tools are very responsive. I'll make other comparisons with DPaint as I discuss other features.

Brilliance's user interface is composed of stackable, button-only, slices of screens. There are no drop-down menus; and as you move the pointer over various tools, a window tells you the name of that tool. This makes it very easy to get working quickly. You can stack slices all the way up to the top of the screen and still make them vanish with the tap of the SPACE bar. In Brilliance, drawing

operations occur in real time, but in TrueBrilliance, there is a lag after you finish a drawing operation when it is updating its 24-bit internal image. Also, brush and filled tools will do a temporary preview before you release the button. For example, if you have a gradient-filled rectangle with transparency turned on, Brilliance will draw the rectangle, transparency and all, if you hold the mouse still. But then you can still move the pointer and reshape the rectangle before committing it.

Brilliance has all of the standard drawing tools, but some have extensive control. The rectangle and circle/ellipse tools allow you to draw either from the center or the corner. The curve tool has a Bezier curve mode where you place four control points and can then move them freely before committing the drawing with the right mouse button. I wish all of the tools could use the control point approach.

The Text tool supports scalable fonts, and unlike Deluxe Paint (where you type right on the screen), you type into a requester and the text becomes the current brush. But just like DPaint, you cannot create text with a gradient — you have to place it down first then fill it.

Although the airbrush tool is more adjustable than DPaint's, providing radius, focus and shape, it is still just a sprinkle-brush and not a true airbrush. It is virtually impossible to get a soft looking line — it always gets over-dithered. This is a particularly major disappointment with TrueBrilliance where a soft airbrush should be possible (all other 24-bit paint programs have it) and was done in Digital Creations' own DCTVPaint.

If you make a mistake, there's an UNDO button. And if you made two or more mistakes, you can keep hitting UNDO again and again, removing parts of your drawing. Then you can REDO and add back what you just took away. UNDO/REDO is modified by sizing the buffer that holds your changes.

Brilliance has a good variety of drawing modes, all of which are well implemented. They are: (Solid) Color, Tint, Colorize, Brighten, Darken, Stencil (Draw), Mix, Smooth, Smear, Avg Smear, Range, Cycle, Random, Dither 1 and 2, Negative, Halfbright (in EHB mode) and Not. Stencil lets you modify the shape of the stencil with drawing tools, Range cycles colors you draw over according to the current gradient. Dither is a selectable (usually checkerboard) pattern. You can always toggle between Color and whatever mode you have selected.

Gradient modes are: Horizontal, Vertical, Linear, Highlight, Spherical and Radial. Gradients are created by clicking and placing colors on a scrollable clothesline. You can alter a numerical value that will give more apparent colors than the ones you place down. That relieves you from having to select all of the colors of a range in the

palette — you could just pick the two ends.

Brushes can be sized, flipped, bent, sheared, rotated or outlined. You can have eight alternative brushes, each represented by an icon on the brush screen. Brushes can be loaded from or saved to the Clipboard. Animbrushes are fully supported with morphing. You can really appreciate the buttons-based design if you've used DPaint's menus and windows for animbrushes. The morphing is not bad, but the regions that are created in the process are divided by what looks like lightning bolts. For real morphing, you'll want a real morphing program.

The Stencil operates in two ways — by colors and by drawing shapes. Color selection is easy by toggling on the ever-present selection palette or you can lasso an area on the screen and all the colors inside get chosen. Switching between color selection and drawing shapes is a breeze. TrueBrilliance has a color variance feature to get a range of colors by selecting just one. One interesting effect is that the stencil will warp gradients that are drawn overlapping it.

For those of you who use DPaint, animation is probably either a practiced science or a mystical art. With Brilliance, it is straightforward and fast. DPaint AGA is notoriously slow and even locks up when you try to play some animations. A drag-bar in Brilliance allows you to scroll through the frames; and if you move too fast, it skips until you stop on one. Frames can be created, added, deleted and copied. Similar to the Move Requester of DPaint is the Tween screen. Tweening allows you to animate a brush over all or part of an animation in X, Y, Z movement and rotation as well as opacity. Each aspect can be independently set for ease-in or ease out. And the best part is you can edit the position and rotation of the start and end values both numerically and visually (with a special editing screen). Unfortunately you cannot load or save these numbers, which would allow more complex paths. You can do a wireframe preview and if you don't like it after rendering, you can UNDO it, frame by frame.

Brilliance uses custom file requestors which have various buttons relevant to different types of files. One common function is an Info button that will tell you about a file you have located with the requestor (like image format or number of frames). Brilliance can load register based images with up to 256 colors, grey scale images, and DCTV display images. TrueBrilliance can load HAM, HAM8, and 15 or 24-bit pictures. Both can read/write ANIM OPT5 (the old standard) and ANIM OPT 8.

DOCUMENTATION

Documentation is a single, small, spiral-bound book. It contains Installation, Tutorials and Reference for both Brilliance and TrueBrilliance. The Tutorials are comprehensive but not exciting. The Reference is extremely useful in explaining the few things that aren't apparent just by using the program.

LIKES AND DISLIKES

Everything is well organized and operates smoothly.

I just wish they had gone a little further in some areas, rather than just doing what everyone else already had in a paint program (like more flexible animation frame editing). Also, there's no ARexx or support for third party graphics boards.

Here's one complaint about Brilliance. I enjoy the way that DPaint lets you interrupt anything with the SPACE bar or ESCape. You could also switch from a rectangle to a line to a circle in mid-action. You can't do either with Brilliance. Not everything can be aborted or changed.

COMPARISONS TO OTHER PRODUCTS

I have been comparing this to DPaint a lot and my verdict is: keep DPaint on your hard drive for a few weeks while you get used to Brilliance. But soon you won't need DPaint. Since TrueBrilliance lacks a real airbrush as well as alpha (transparency) mapping, you'll still need a program like ADPro, ImageFX or OpalPaint. Those programs also have many more drawing modes and file formats.

BUGS

None found.

VENDOR SUPPORT

I haven't had any problems serious enough to call Digital Creations yet. I also own DCTV, which also was very stable in its first release — and soon the 1.1 version came out which added the features many thought were missing in 1.0. I expect the same to happen with Brilliance.

WARRANTY

The warranty is 90 days and requires the customer to pay all shipping charges. ✓

There was a plane crash over mid-ocean, and only three survivors were left in the life-raft: the Pope, the President, and Mayor Daley. Unfortunately, it was a one-man life-raft, and quickly sinking, so they started debating who should be allowed to stay.

The Pope pointed out that he was the spiritual leader of millions all over the world, the President explained that if he died then America would be stuck with the Vice-President, and so forth. Then Mayor Daley said, "Look! We're not solving anything like this! The only fair thing to do is to vote on it." So they did.

Mayor Daley won by 97 votes.

GeoCanvas

review by Geoff Sullivan
downloaded from Fidonet

More than one person on this echo has asked about Nate Fiedler's GeoCanvas 3.0 and how it compares with GeoPaint. I recently purchased GeoCanvas 128 and have a few comments I will share.

How does it compare? Well, at the same time it is less, and it is more. Right now it has pretty much the same tools that function about the same way as GeoPaint. However, there are some differences that some will like and others will not. I can only tell you about the 80 column version. There may be some minor differences in 40 columns.

First off, the paint window is longer, but a bit narrower than a full page due to the sizing switches on the right side. You can make the drawing window any size using these switches. You can also move the window around the screen and layer up to three different documents at once. Using GeoWizard you can even work on six documents at a time! What a feature. One drawback of the larger drawing window is that it is too large to be cut/copied and pasted into GeoWrite. The window in GeoPaint is your limit here.

GeoCanvas comes with only one tool, the pointer. All the others are installable. You may set up different versions of GC in this way. GC also "remembers" how you had it set up the last time you used it. There are settings for screen options, color (depending on your VDC RAM size), and editable patterns (this is WAY cool!). GeoCanvas also opens its documents in the same place and with the same size window you used when you last saved it.

The other tools — box, ellipse, line, paintbrush, etc. — all have their individual attributes that are available either on a pull-down menu or C= key combinations. One C= combination I would like to see is a C=Undo available no matter what tool you're using. In this version it is available only in a pull-down options menu. Other missing items are resizing, smoothing, and transparent pasting. Since the tools are separate, perhaps there will be a tool available in the future that can handle this. For now you'll have to use GeoPaint.

One really great feature is the pattern editor. There are 32 patterns available, the same as GeoPaint plus four others, but all may be modified by the user and will be saved along with GC whenever it is saved. There is also an improvement on the GeoPaint grid feature. In GeoPaint, the grid size is set. In GC you get a menu to set the lines to any distance (in pixels) you want, both horizontally and vertically. You can also choose to draw on only one axis. It's an easy way to print lined paper if that's what you want!

A difference that I did not like was that pixel is a tool and not a mode. You can't use two tools at once, so

you can't use a line tool or a paintbrush while drawing pixels. Text is also a bit different. In GeoPaint the text tool lets you enter multiple lines of text, but not so in GC. Each line of text must be entered separately and moved where you want it. GC does not seem to allow pasting of text scraps either, even though there is a short tutorial graphic page that comes on the disk that looks as if were "typed" in GeoCanvas or imported from a text editor. The text cursor always starts in the same place on the screen and text can be moved after it is typed. Text attributes are selected from the attribute menu.

An annoying thing about GeoPaint was the ruler. GeoCanvas has a ruler that is capable of leaving tic marks so that you can grab another tool and actually go back to the measurements you made and use them for something. Dimensions can be in either inches or pixels, and your drawing window's position on the canvas is reported in terms of cards.

Along with GeoCanvas, the tools, and some doc files, you get three utilities. PaintCan allows you to change the "ownership" and icon of a Paint/Canvas document. Ownership dictates which application will be launched when you double click on a document. You can also change the way the VDC colors look. FontCan adds the delete character to fonts the don't have it so that the delete key actually works. But the neatest utility is ScrapCan. This puppy lets you cut and paste scraps up to a full page into and out of Paint/Canvas documents. You can change the viewing threshold from 1-16 to lighten or darken the previewed image. (This option is also available in Canvas' preview mode.) This one has a transparent option.

In terms of size, GeoCanvas 128 is a bit smaller than its counterpart. Nate has really done quite a job to get all that stuff squeezed into under 50k. GC does need 64k of your REU to do its work, so if you don't have one you're out of luck. And then there's the issue of color in 80 columns. I guess it's nice. I can't figure out how to do anything with it. I was never able to figure out how to use it in 40 column GeoPaint either, so I won't say anything except that for those of you that can deal with color it's nice to finally see it in 80 columns. And the colors look real nice on an RGB screen!

My final comment about GeoCanvas is that it is a masterful approach to a needed revision of good old GeoPaint. I think it will go a lot further if the support is there. Ultimately I would like to see an application that can combine the tools of GeoPaint and GeoPublish. Then we'd REALLY be cookin'!!

[Reprinted with permission from the CBM-GEOS echo of Fidonet.] ✓

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Amiga By-The-Loop

Pete Goad

Happy New Year to all our members!!

A New Year and a new look for Amiga By The Loop. Our President, Ben Clingerman got this month's meeting off to an early start. Actually it was the correct start time. Ben introduced himself and our new vice president Wayne Brodnax. He then talked about how every member of the club should try to get more involved in the Club.

The question and answer session revolved around our old friend *PageStream*... maybe by the end of January was the consensus, but nobody I saw was holding their breath. Ben proposed we have a swap table at the meeting for people to exchange hardware and software.

The presentation this month was an in-depth look at the new text editor from INOVAtronics called *Edge*. The demo was presented by Greg Glaser of INOVAtronics. There is nothing like getting the publisher to demonstrate its products. Greg ran through all the useful features of *Edge* by showing (using Wayne's turbo-charged A1200) a comparison to the old standard of text editors. He explained that *Edge* requires ARexx to run its macros and, as is usual with INOVAtronics products, it is totally configurable. If you have used *Directory Opus* then you will understand what I mean. If you haven't used *Opus* then shame on you and/or you should have been at the meeting! Many thanks to Greg for the presentation and to INOVAtronics for keeping the Amiga up there with excellent software.

Last month I apologized for not getting the METCOM column into the newsletter. This month I have to apologize for giving door prize credit to the wrong guy. Shame on me. Anyhow I have it on good authority that it was Bob Hill that supplied the

door prizes for last month. Thanks Bob. I have no idea who donated this month's door prizes. However, I can tell you that they were won by the following LUCKY people... Gary Campbell won *TextCraft* !!!, Robert Shepherd won *The Untouchables* and Bob Hill won *Vektor Storm*. Funny, I seem to recognize that name? Anyway, congrats to all our winners.

Well, that's it for this month. We hope to see you at our next meeting of the Amiga By-The-Loop in February.

Amiga Central

Johnny Kitchens

It's the start of a new year for our chapter. Seems like it was only yesterday that it was last year. Maybe it was. With our new year we get to see our new president in action. I welcome Scott Lamb to the post of president of our chapter. Scott opened the meeting with the usual fanfare and allowed other executives to make announcements of any importance. Ned, our librarian, told of new disks available to all members. Seems the Fred Fish collection is experiencing a few holdups. Harold, who's in charge of the Super Disk collection, told of using compression so that more could be placed on each disk. From there we moved to our ever popular rumors, news, and question and answer session.

Our first news was the possible rumor that NewTek has purchased the rights to make the custom chipset from Commodore. I have heard a similar thing about Hewlett Packard. Our next lengthy discussion covered the CD32. Commodore's latest game machine seems to be getting quite a bit of talk from everyone. We certainly covered it in some detail. Scott went over a list of rumors that have been making the rounds lately about Commodore. Many of them were encouraging.

Let's hope they come true! A question on program size comparison between Amiga and the PC. Why are the PC programs so large? A question on how to use a program uploaded to the BBS for use with *Directory Opus*. I believe we cleared that one up quite well. Some information on a SAS 6.5 update was presented. A question on modem problems, and what kind of modem should be considered for upgrade purposes. While 14,400 looks fast now, wait till you see a 28,800 in operation. A problem with *ProWrite* 3.2 and Canon Bubble-Jet printers was given some discussion, along with printer drivers. Amazing how such a small bunch of bytes can cause so much to happen.

Finally, we moved to our feature presentation — *Final Writer*, with Harold Williams giving the details. *Final Writer* is the latest word processor from SoftWood, the creator of *Final Copy*. With *Final Writer*, the word processor moves a little closer to desktop publishing. *Final Writer* adds many new graphic capabilities not previously seen in our word processors. Interface changes abound in this product. Buttons to perform special functions. Buttons that can be programmed to your own personal desire. The ARexx capabilities are much improved over *Final Copy*. Harold demonstrated one simple script that performed an enormous task with ease. Automatic operations also abound. Indices, Tables of Contents, and Bibliographies were all simple operations in *Final Writer*. If you are considering a new word processor for your Amiga, this could be the one to consider. Now if they would just put an undo in there.

The February Amiga Central meeting will feature a demonstration of a SCSI tape drive system. Darryl Simmons will show us how the backup system works using *AmiBack* (Moonlighter Software). He will also demonstrate the *TapeWorm-FS* (also

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from Moonlighter Software) filing system that allows a SCSI tape drive to be used like a normal AmigaDOS drive.

Amiga North Dallas December — Genny White

Thanks to all our members who found time in the busy holiday season to share an evening with us! Our December meeting had the traditional Games theme, and many systems and games were on hand for our amusement and amazement. The shareware game *Scorched Tanks* was a hit. There were some tasty munchies, and a Good Time Was Had By All. We missed our Librarian, William. Where ya been, William? And in other soon-to-be missing persons reports, Brett Hester confessed that he just can't handle the glory of the Vice Presidency any longer and had to step down. To the rescue came Steve Nichols, willing and eager and able, to step into the VP vacancy! As I had not expected to be secretarying after December, I had signed up for a class on Tuesday evenings, which will keep me away for two meetings. To the rescue again came Steve, who has brought you the January chapter notes elsewhere in this newsletter, in addition to arranging three months of interesting presentations **already**. Way to go, Steve! Thanks for your outstanding efforts! By the way, guys, you still haven't returned in significant numbers since our location changed. It's really not that hard to get to, and down 75 and 635 it's a lot quicker than you expect. Call me for directions and encouragement (422-7131) if you are tempted to stay home...your input and participation is missed.

Tom Brooks passed on a lot of assorted Rumors and News bytes. For example: there were 155 CD32 games listed in the Amiga Report online magazine. This certainly bodes

well for the CD32's growing popularity. Tom described a new "cable modem" that can send data over cable-TV lines at (gasp) 10,000,000 BAUD. He also has heard that the resin plant that blew up over in Japan last July has been rebuilt, although their troubles have caused higher memory prices, hopefully temporarily. The 4091 SCSI interface card has been picked up for production by a company called DKB. Tom also said the CD32 was doing MPEG at WOCA. For those who like to read more than alphabet soup in their newsletters, that's a new compression format (Motion Picture Expert Group) for storing movies on CD, demonstrated at World of Commodore Amiga. They were showing bits of *Star Trek VI*, and it was crystal clear, including freeze, rewind, and fast-forward features without error. More alphabets: the AAA chip set (the "next level up from AGA") is "95% complete," and a board will come to upgrade your 3000 or 4000 system. There is also news of a new high-speed modem international standard for 28.8K BAUD transmission, coming soon. Does anybody else recall when 1200 BAUD was "the Ultimate" and "Nobody could ever go any faster and why would you want to anyway?" Tom's last tidbyte was documentation of a problem and some solutions to incursions by a hacker called "The Moz." Apparently this individual has put archived files out on bulletin boards, etc. which, when arriving at a new system, can direct files into specific directories, overwriting things like your startup-sequence and getting into all kinds of trouble. The cure is to make your inbound data more secure, either by using a "no-path" option if your unarchiver has one, or passing the incoming file through a script file that watches for any explicit directory access. For more information, check with Tom. Thanks, Mr. Brooks sir, for a very

informative list of new items!

Santa must have stopped by Dataphile in Plano in December, 'cause there was a whole goody-bag full of doorprizes sent our way by my new Amiga neighbors! Bruce sent us 2 copies of *Santa Paravia and Fiumaccio* (a graphic empire-building game) by StarSoft, *Laser Squad* by MicroIllusions, *Total Eclipse* by Spotlight Software, *Seconds Out* (a boxing game) by StarSoft, *Psycho* by Box Office, Inc. (just when you thought it was safe to go back in the shower), *Clever and Smart* (from the German cartoon characters of the same name) by Micropartner, *FrostByte* by StarSoft, and *The Last Inca* by Free Spirit Software. Not to be forgotten, our good friends at Metropolitan Computing added a *Best of Amiga* issue with three disks to our treasure trove, with a family tree program, disk cataloger, chess-playing utility, and much more. Thanks, dealers! You made our holiday celebration even more worth celebrating.

Steve's art presentation for February sounds so interesting I may skip my class and come after all. Please join us there! Happy 1994!

Amiga North Dallas January — Steve Nichols

Danny, our illustrious Prez, opened the meeting with a New Years Resolution. Henceforth, he will no longer query new meeting attendees as to their personnel computer holdings. That said, he introduced the one new officer, VP Steve Nichols, and the returning officers from last year.

From there, he launched into NEWS. First up, ex-Veep Brett Hester had heard that Hewlett-Packard and NewTek had licensed the AGA chip set from Commodore. HP will be using the chip set in a console device. Prez Danny mentioned that an interview with

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Commodore's Dave Haynie was available on Portal. Brett was back with the announcement that NewTek had demo'ed a ten RISC Screamer. Plus: NewTek had apologized for their 1993 ad campaign. Other tidbits included: *Opal Vision* is now down to around the \$300 range and CDTV can be attained for \$99.

On to Rumours: NONE. That makes this a rather short paragraph.

The floor was then opened for QUESTIONS: The discussion centered around modem settings and connect problems. Member Tom Brooks graciously offered to help anyone with modem problems and questions. By calling his BBS at 276-9476 or 276-7697, just drop the sysop a note and he'll get back to you. This BBS is now almost six months old and has logged over 2500 calls.

The Main Event: With a round of applause, we welcomed Scott Martindale from Metropolitan Computers. He came armed with an A4000 loaded with and EMPLANT and an EGS/Spectrum. The EMPLANT is a MAC emulator and the Spectrum is a 24 Bit Graphics Card. The EMPLANT can also run on an A2000, but it does require a minimum of a 68020 with an MMU and goes in any ZORRO 2 or 3 slot.

Three steps to get you up and running. First buy the EMPLANT (\$350 to \$450), secondly buy the MAC ROMs (\$100 to \$400, depending on where you buy), and thirdly buy MAC OS 7.1 (\$100). There is some undocumented software that comes with the EMPLANT, so talk to the guys at Metropolitan.

You can multi-task when using EMPLANT. More good news; the ROMs load into memory when you start the program to speed-up the proceedings. Even more good news: up to 95% of MAC software runs on EMPLANT. Last of the good news: the EMPLANT is comparable to a Quadro 950.

Random notes: 2 AppleTalk

Ports, SCSI controller (that can be accessed by the Amiga when EMPLANT is not running), and 8 bit audio.

Scott's intent was to only show that the EMPLANT worked on the Amiga. In spite of that intent, he did load up one piece of software. *Adobe Photoshop* looked really nice, though Scott needs to work on his photo touch-up of the bearded girl. That aside, it was a really nice presentation that we all enjoyed. Kudos to Scott for gracing our meeting.

Door Prizes: One software title from Metropolitan Computer and sixteen left-overs from our chapter at METCOM '93. Not quite enough to cover the twenty-five attendees, but adequate. And the WINNERS were:

Bob Chancy — *Dr. T's MT32 Editor* for the Amiga
Ned Kelly — *Defender of the Crown*
Steve Nichols — *TerrorPods*
Rodney Yoshido — *Mean 18*
Manny Flo — *Hunt for Red October*
Kenny Teoh — *Tiger Road*
Todd Murray — *Baal*
Aurora Chancy — *Seconds Out*
Eddie Corr — *Over Run*
Egon Pasztor — *Fine Print Software*
Danny Barnett — *Deep Space*
Forrest Massey — *Star Fleet I*
Don Sobieck — *Obliterator*
Bill Harmon — *Conflict Middle East*
Tom Johnson — *F-29 Retaliator*
Larry Slay — *Warlock*
William Dockendorf — *Questron II*

NEXT MONTH: METCOM '93 Art Winner — Michael Tilton

MARCH: TBA

APRIL: Ned Kelly & *Phonepak*

Metro C-64/128

Brenda Sessums

Come on down, you're the next contestant on "The 8-Bit is Right"! Fourteen totally thrilled people did just that during our January meeting

and were well compensated (with goodies, tips, and silliness).

The main highlight of the January meeting was when Jim Marshall donated all his C-64 and Vic 20 equipment, software and books to our club. Thanks Jim! The Vic 20 was where it all started for us Commodore 8-bitters and it was great to see one. I had one when they first came out on the Toys-R-Us shelves in 1980!

Calling all users...be on the lookout for meeting topics. Yes, that's right, Phil Heberer still needs your input on what you want to hear, learn about, or do at upcoming meetings (and since you are reading this, you are the "your" he is looking for). Bring your ideas to the next meeting, please!

Commodore Country has started carrying *Commodore Force* and may get *Commodore Format*, two British magazines for our 8-bit Commodores. CC are the only ones in the area I've seen that care enough to carry them.

Not only do these magazines carry information and reviews on new programs, they also have free software! Yes, that's right — FREE. (Of course, you have to buy the magazine for around \$10 U.S.) The one drawback (or blessing?) to the software is that it is on tape instead of disk. Even though tape drives are slower than disk drives, the price of equipment makes the tape drive more popular in the U.K. That's why many popular programs and public domain (PD) software are available on tape.

Right now, Commodore Country has tape drives for giveaway prices (\$5 at this writing). These may not last long at those prices, so if you want to use this software, you may want to take them up on their offer. The one we got from them loads the magazine tape programs perfectly.

If you have never used a tape drive before, here are a few tips. If

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you are using a C-64, you can load a program one of two ways. One way is to hold down the <Commodore> and <run stop> keys. When you are prompted to "press play on tape", do just that. The computer will search for the first program it encounters on the tape and load it. Another way to load is to type: Load "gamename" (where "gamename" is the program you want to load). Press play on the cassette drive (called a "datasette"), and then type run after the ready prompt.

If you are using a C-128, get into C-64 mode by first pressing the <40/80 DISPLAY> button, then type: GO64. When it says "are you sure?" type: Y (and hit return). Or you can get into C-64 mode by holding down the <Commodore> key and turning on your computer (be sure that the <40/80 DISPLAY> button is depressed). To load a cassette program type: Load "gamename",1 (1 is the device number for the datasette.) Note: if you leave the '1' off when using the C-128D, the computer will try to load a program from the internal disk drive.

Now on to the review, *Commodore Force's* "Real Action Tape #28" has three arcade-style games: *LED Storm*, *Bionic Commando*, and *Trantor*. We'll try to have these available for a demo at the February club meeting.

Bionic Commando is a platform "Airborne commando" shoot-em up where you use your grappling hook to swing from one level to another. Blast the enemy semi-automatic machine gun fire to get points. There is a lot of garbage across the upper portion of the screen, so I guess this is a bad tape copy (or bad programming).

In *Trantor*, a scrolling space shoot-em up, you are the last surviving soldier from your military troop ship. It's a "Turrican"-type game (hey, that's where I heard that music before!). Besides battling nasty creatures and robots, you have

to find all the letters to a scrambled codeword and enter it into the main security terminal before the time (or you) expire. Sounds too easy, right? Well, not quite. Locate each of the eight NIK terminals to get one letter at each terminal and your timer will be reset to 90 seconds. Be sure to write down each letter before leaving the terminal. You can access terminals, lockers, ammo dumps, and elevators by pulling back on the joystick. Good luck, soldier!

The best program in the free cassette is *LED Storm* which Commodore Format rated 94%. It is a great top-down car game and the music is excellent. It looks similar to an arcade game where you are a secret agent in a special-equipped car that can shoot (or be smashed) by cars driven by the bad guys. A special vehicle flies ahead of you and drops off special weapons, fuel, energy and other goodies. When your car gets demolished, you have control of the special vehicle, so maneuver it where you want to launch your car and hit the fire button. The road is treacherous and just drops off at the wierdest places (a lot like the Metroplex freeways!) so be sure to use the jump ramps while pressing forward on the joystick to sail across the deep chasm to the road on the other side.

It's nice to hear when someone is putting out new software for Commodore 8-bitters, no matter where you have to go to get it. Psytronik is coming out with a platform action horror game called *Flubble And Squij*. This British game by the commercial branch of Binary Zone PD looks like it will have really good graphics. They already have a game out on tape called *Sceptre Of Baghdad* which is already selling well in the U.K. For more information, contact Psytronik, 34 Portland Rd, Droitwich, Worcester WR9 7QW.

One of the few public domain (PD) software companies in the U.K.

which only offers their programs on disk has 1000s of programs for our computers: Kingsway Computers. Their disks include utilities, demos, games (e.g., arcade, sports, adventures, pinball). You can get a free catalog by sending a self-addressed envelope and two international reply coupons (available at your local post office). Two of their offers are 1) 50 games on disk for \$12.99 U.K., and 2) 100 games on disk for \$19.99 U.K. Kingsway takes Visa and Mastercard and can be reached at: Kingsway Computers, Dept. C64, 72 Glencoe Rd., Sheffield S2 2SR, or telephone (0742) 750623.

CMD is reported to soon have a 1351 mouse clone (three-button no less), and a magazine. (We'll see...)

Here's the 1993 C-64/128 Gallup Top 20, sponsored by Penguin Biscuits:

- 1) The Simpsons
- 2) Creatures
- 3) Rainbow Islands
- 4) Terminator 2
- 5) Street Fighter
- 6) Fun School 2: Under 6
- 7) WWF Wrestlemania
- 8) Multimixx 1 Golf
- 9) Night Shift
- 10) Trivial Pursuit
- 11) Fun School: 6-8 Years
- 12) Rodland
- 13) Jack Nicklaus Golf
- 14) Super Monaco GP
- 15) Outrun Europa
- 16) Robocod
- 17) Hook
- 18) Fun School 2: Over 8's
- 19) Final Fight
- 20) The Addams Family.

There are some really good titles in that poll, but let us know what your Top 10 are at the next meeting. Be sure to be there, because you don't want to miss out!

The Fine Print

The Metroplex Commodore Computer Club

Statement of Purpose: The Metroplex Commodore Computer Club is a not-for-profit organization devoted to the collection and dissemination of computer knowledge, to the encouragement of computer education, and to the use of Commodore computers in the home, at school, and in business.

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The MCCC News

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Articles: Members are encouraged to submit articles. Articles may be submitted as ASCII text or in Amiga *excellence!*, *ProWrite*, *WordPerfect* or *Final Copy* format. They may be uploaded to the MCCC BBS, to StarText, or submitted on disk. If these methods are not possible, I will, as a last resort, accept printed articles. If graphics need to be included they may be submitted as IFF files, DR2D, *PageStream* or *Art Expressions* structured drawings, *Professional Draw* clips or, again as a last resort, printed output.

Deadline: The deadline for submissions to the MCCC News is 7am of the fourth Saturday of each month. Payment must accompany all ad copy. Make checks payable to MCCC and mail c/o Bill Raecke, 2614 Charolais Way, Arlington, Texas 76017.

Extra Copies: Extra Copies of the MCCC News are available at \$1 per copy. Orders should be forwarded with the required fee by the regular newsletter deadline.

MCCC Board of Directors

President	Ned Kelly	817-277-5825
Vice President	Eddie Monjay	817-735-8339
Treasurer	John Malmstrom	817-282-6158
Secretary	Okley Moss	817-282-7751
Librarian	Ned Kelly	817-277-5825
(C64/128 help)	Joe Ostrokol	817-534-1990
Education Chair	Harold Williams	817-483-0537
BBS Coordinator	Okley Moss	817-282-7751
Newsletter Editor	Bill Raecke	817-465-2014
Past President	David Owens	817-577-2304

MCCC BBS Numbers

(METRO @ 14,400 BAUD)	817-268-4191
(METRO @ 14,400 BAUD)	817-268-4196

MCCC Chapter Officers

Amiga By-The-Loop Chapter

President	Ben Clingerman	817-346-7266
Vice President	Wayne Brodnax	817-244-0828
Treasurer	Bruce Nelson	817-498-0899
Secretary	Pete Goad	817-496-0509
Librarian	Gary Campbell	817-297-4125

Amiga Central Chapter

President	Scott Lamb	817-685-7694
Vice President	Harold Williams	817-483-0537
Treasurer	Bill Raecke	817-465-2014
Secretary	Johnny Kitchens	817-649-8632
Librarian	Ned Kelly	817-277-5825

Amiga North Dallas Chapter

President	Danny Barnett	214-276-1330
Vice President	Steve Nichols	214-530-6345
Treasurer	Gus Reiter	214-713-7348
Secretary	Genny White	214-422-7131
Librarian	Wm. Dockendorf	214-407-0564

Metro C-64/128 Chapter

President	Jo Lynn Linville	817-783-2784
Vice President	John Burt	817-441-8115
Treasurer	John Sookma	817-447-1931
Secretary	Brenda Sessums	817-238-9891
Librarian	Phil Heberer	817-847-8232

Normal Meeting Schedule

1st Tuesday	MCCC Board of Directors
2nd Tuesday	Amiga By-The-Loop Chapter
2nd Saturday	Metro C-64/128 Chapter
3rd Tuesday	Amiga North Dallas Chapter
3rd Thursday	Amiga Central Chapter

SIGS

VidSIG	Chuck Johnson	817-478-7313
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Feb 1 MCCC Board of Directors
7:00 pm — N.Richland Hills Community Center
Loop 820 at Rufe Snow, N.Richland Hills

Feb 8 Amiga By-The-Loop Chapter
7:30 pm — N.Richland Hills Community Center
Loop 820 at Rufe Snow, N.Richland Hills

Feb 12 Metro C-64/128 Chapter
1:30 pm — Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine
Lancaster & Camp Bowie, Fort Worth

Feb 15 Amiga North Dallas Chapter
7:30 pm — King of Glory Lutheran Church
6411 LBJ Freeway, Dallas

Feb 17 Amiga Central Chapter
7:30 pm — Arlington Community Center
2800 S. Center, Arlington

Mar 1 MCCC Board of Directors
7:00 pm — N.Richland Hills Community Center
Loop 820 at Rufe Snow, N.Richland Hills

March Newsletter Deadline — 7am, February 26

**These Dealers offer
discounts to MCCC
members**

**Be sure to show your
membership card**

ANSOFT Data Systems

Amiga Software & Hardware
2801 W. 7th Street
Fort Worth, Texas 76107
(817) 870-2529

Commodore Country

C64, C128 & Amiga Software
1420 County Road 914
Burleson, Texas 76028
(817) 295-7658

DATAPHILE

Amiga Software, Hardware & Repair
221 West Parker Rd. Suite 540
Plano, Texas 75023
(214) 516-1157

Metropolitan Computer

Amiga Software, Hardware & Repair
4372 Spring Valley
Dallas, Texas 75244
(214) 702-9119

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Metroplex Commodore Computer Club
P.O. Box 813
Bedford, Texas 76095

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